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# Analysis of Independent Curriculum Based on Differentiated Learning Early Childhood Education Level

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## Abstract
Differentiated learning has a close relationship with children's developmental achievements, especially with the abilities of the basic educational concepts of the alpha generation. when differentiated learning can be implemented well, there will be recognition and attention to individual differences between children. this allows teachers to respond specifically to each child's characteristics and learning needs. this research aims to describe teachers' reflections on the application of basic preschool concepts in implementing differentiated learning and to describe the improvements and advantages made by kindergarten teachers in implementing differentiated learning. this research uses interview techniques as data collection and documentation techniques in the form of pictures in the classroom and school environment. the data source for this research is a learning teacher at a driving school. the data was analyzed using the mil amd hubbermen data analysis technique, namely the flow analysis technique. the results of this research show that group b kindergarten teachers' reflections on differentiated learning carried out in driving schools include diagnostic assessments, content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. in more detail, the implementation experienced quite a lot of obstacles and there were even activities that were outside the provisions of the independence provisions.

**Keywords :** *analysis of independent curriculum; differentiated learning; early childhood*



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## Introduction

Education policies constantly change along with the development of conditions for the technologi in the State of Indonesia, starting with policies issued by the government (Lestariningrum, 2022) Current technological developments cause various lifestyle changes that occur in various aspects of human life so that they can influence individuals in terms of how they think, and behave in society and then direct someone to transform from one technological century to another (Nastiti & Ni'mal'Abdu, 2020).

Technological devices are created to facilitate various human activities in life, Generation Alpha is the generation most attached to technology. The alpha generation itself is those born starting in 2010 and are children of the millennial generation Alpha generation children have higher intelligence than previous generations because they can adapt to using technology such as smartphones or similar technology. Therefore, children are the foundation

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of the parents' souls in realizing their dreams and are the only hope in the family as well as the successors of the nation/golden generation (Jamil et al., 2020).

The alpha generation is a generation that cannot be separated from the use and development of technology, social media, gadgets, and the internet, and a research study conducted by international institutions and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in 2015 revealed that there are around 30 million internet users in Indonesia who are thought to be from childhood and adolescence (Swandhina & Maulana, 2022). This means that it is characterized by children living in the 21st century.

It is said that the 21st century is a century that demands quality in all efforts and results of human work. The 21st century naturally demands quality human resources, produced by professionally managed institutions that produce superior results (Nyoto, Amat, Sudjimat, Dwi Agus, Wijaya, 2016). Therefore, institutions must be able to develop existing potentials, so that they become their characteristics in early childhood education institutions in particular, and can produce superior output (Hasibuan & Prastowo, 2019).

For this reason, early childhood education institutions need to cultivate the next generation as individuals with good character (Jayawardana et al., 2022). It is said that early childhood is the golden generation which is the next generation of the nation in that period is very productive, very valuable and very valuable, so it needs to be managed and utilized well so that the quality of being an intelligent person, and a competitive person, for teachers can create learning plans that are adapted to the characteristics of students so that the learning delivered is meaningful and students do not experience difficulties in understanding the learning concepts that have been conveyed (Elok Endang Rasmani et al., 2023).

The characteristics of students are very important for teachers to understand so that students can be actively involved according to their learning abilities (Ashfarina et al., 2023). Learning should not only transfer knowledge and skills to students but also provide space for students to be able to develop themselves and their creativity according to their needs. learning (Syarfina et al., 2022). One way to design learning that is tailored to the characteristics of students is by implementing differentiation learning strategies.

Differentiated learning is an effort to modify learning in the classroom to accommodate the learning needs of each student. Differentiated learning is a learning strategy launched to support the Merdeka Belajar implementation policy (Hidayah et al., 2023). The success of a PAUD institution cannot be separated from the existence of educational management in that institution, one of which is the curriculum (Muhammad Syaifuddin Zuhri & Muhammad Nasir, 2023).The curriculum is dynamic to create quality education according to current developments. Indonesia has experienced many curriculum changes. In 2022, a curriculum change will be implemented in Indonesia, namely the Independent Curriculum (Eka Retnaningsih, 2017). Permendikbudristek Number 5 of 2022 states that graduate competency standards are a reference for the 2013 curriculum, emergency curriculum, and independent curriculum. It is further confirmed in Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 56 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the Context of Learning Recovery which contains three curriculum options that can be used in educational units in the context of learning recovery along with the structure of the Independent Curriculum, the Independent Curriculum without changing the curriculum of the educational unit currently being implemented (Sriandila et al., 2023).

The part and principle that applies to this option is the application of differentiated learning strategies (Digna & Widyasari, 2023).Differentiation is a process in teaching and learning activities that pays attention to students based on their abilities, and what students like, and meets students' individual needs in carrying out the learning process (Putri et al., 2023). This is in line with what was stated (Eka Sapti Cahya Ningrum, 2017) that Differentiation means giving students the freedom to be creative with their abilities without any pressure and coercion from other parties.

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According to Santos, et al in Herwina 2021, the differentiation learning strategy appears to be used as an approach to the learning process to increase creative student behavior. The differentiation learning strategy is divided into three components, namely: content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation.

Content differentiation: Content differentiation is a form of implementing independent learning in which the learning method provides material to students based on their skills, learning profiles, and knowledge. Process differentiation: The process differentiation component is how students process the ideas, information, and material they have obtained. How students interact with the material and how these interactions become part of what determines students' learning choices. Product differentiation: The product differentiation component is how students demonstrate what they have learned. In other words, it is how students actualize the understanding they gain in various works according to their talents and interests.Furthermore, one of the most important aspects of differentiated learning strategies is the aspect of learning readiness. Readiness to learn (readiness) is the capacity to learn new material Primary (2022:609). A task that considers a student's level of readiness will take students out of their comfort zone, but with the right learning environment and adequate support, they can still master the new material. Intertwined with this, of course, is to see the extent to which students understand the lesson material that the teacher will convey (Sobana, 2020). Furthermore, so that learning readiness is detected well, the teacher carries out a diagnostic assessment to measure and find the unique level of students' understanding so that teachers will provide different treatment to students in the classroom.

Besides that, the differentiation learning strategy emphasizes students' understanding based on talents and interests. Interest is a person's feeling of interest, liking, and desire for more which is usually accompanied by a feeling of enjoyment towards a thing or activity, without any encouragement. The interest in this research is students' interest in participating in the learning process at school.

In this case, the teacher plays an important role in arousing interest in learning in students, because children's interest does not come suddenly, but there must be an effort made by the teacher to arouse students' interest in learning, as well as provide positive reinforcement when teaching and learning activities take place. Based on the introduction and explanation of the theoretical concepts above, the aims of this research are (a) to describe reflections on basic preschool concepts for teachers in implementing differentiated learning, and (b) the advantages of preschool teachers in implementing differentiated learning.

## Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative type of research that describes the reality in the field when the research is carried out. This study uses two data sources, namely primary data sources taken directly, namely the principal, teachers and children at Ahmad Yani Kindergarten. This research was taken from the results of interviews and observations.

Secondary data sources are obtained indirectly or obtained from a second party, namely the school environment, books and documentation. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model (in Yusuf, 2013) namely: a) data collection, b) data reduction, c) data presentation, and d) data verification. This study uses a data credibility test to check the validity of the data, test the credibility of the data by triangulation.

In this study, researchers used source and method triangulation. Source triangulation to test the credibility of the data is done by checking the data that has been obtained through several sources. Source triangulation will be carried out on Ahmad Yani Kindergarten children, school principals and teachers. Method triangulation is done by comparing information or data in different ways. In this study, the researchers used the method of interview, observation, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2014). if you are using Word, use either the Microsoft Equation Editor or the MathType add-on ( for equations in your paper (Insert |

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## Results and Discussion

### Implementing Differentiated Learning in Kindergarten

Some things that can be done regarding Kindergarten teacher reflection in implementing differentiated learning include reflection on diagnostic assessments, grouping children's learning styles based on content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. The explanation is as follows :

### Diagnostic assessment

Ditpsd (2000) Diagnostic Assessment is an assessment carried out specifically to identify students' competencies, strengths, and weaknesses so that learning can be designed according to students' competencies and conditions. From the results of interviews with teachers, reflections on diagnostic assessments before starting differentiated learning, namely teachers carry out diagnostic assessment activities spontaneously. The diagnostic assessment carried out refers to the experiences presented by the kindergarten teacher.

> *"I carried out the diagnostic assessment spontaneously, but also looked at experiences. I have taught them in group A, so for background, readiness to learn, you know a little more.*

The diagnostic assessment carried out by the preschool teacher was spontaneous. Based on what the teacher sees and feels while teaching in class. Teachers have not yet reached the stage of creating instruments specifically for diagnostic assessments of each child's learning achievements. Furthermore, the ethnic and cultural background of children is not based on the results of non-cognitive assessments carried out by teachers.

Teaching experience is used as a reference in determining background, learning style, and learning readiness in implementing differentiated learning. This is as stated by (Kuswara & Sumayana, 2020) that this assessment activity for diagnosing children's learning styles and characteristics aims to help children and teachers recognize learning styles that should be a reference in learning both at school and at home and teachers can easily formulate them. teaching materials and applying methods according to students' learning styles.

### Content differentiation

Content differentiation was carried out by the teacher in storytelling activities, namely raising the topic of my imagination and creativity. Teachers based on their experience see students' learning styles and children's learning readiness. The teacher divides three contents into storytelling activities, namely persuasiveness in text, images, and videos. These three things take into account the child's learning style (Juniarti et al., 2022). Incidentally, the teacher has already taken into account the students' learning styles so they remain; divided into groups based on learning styles. Teachers in implementing content-differentiated learning consider the elements in learning outcomes. Multiple intelligences are also used as the basis for grouping based on content differentiation.

However, the differentiation process is not appropriate because it does not fulfill what Tomlinson (2001) said: content is the input of the teaching and learning process. He is what will be taught or what the child wants to be interested in (Tomlinson, 2001). Teacher perceptions used in meeting students' learning needs.

### Process Differentiation

One form of reflection proposed by the teacher, namely by making many variations in the learning process. The aim of this variety of learning is of course to attract children's mental readiness to learn. Process differentiation is one of the activities in implementing a reasonable

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learning process, on students' learning needs. The following is the explanation from the teacher when interviewed.

> *"When choosing a lesson, I started with an icebreaker while checking the students' readiness. Apart from that, I also invited the children to "applause the group B version", so that all the children were united in conditioning them all. "After that, ask about previous material that has been taught. Don't forget to convey the learning objectives, learning flow, and the end of the learning. Next, I reviewed the fairy tale material to remind them of their knowledge of persuasive texts and posters.*

I just divided groups based on learning styles "with areas that they are interested in. Each area has different activities, such as the block area, Reading and Writing area, and Drama area, so that children feel free to play because the learning process aims to give children the perception that learning is fun, not burdensome. In the context of early childhood education, freedom to learn is freedom to play.

Because playing is learning" According to the explanation above, the differentiation process starts by giving children an understanding of the series of learning that will be undertaken, such as conveying learning objectives, learning flow, and the final task of learning. After that, it starts with apperception, namely reminding them of their knowledge about understanding persuasive texts.

**Product differentiation**

Product differentiation is used to facilitate students in completing learning outcomes. Through the product, students feel given the stage to create creative assignments based on projects that have been determined and mutually agreed upon (Cahyati Ngaisah et al., 2023). Each group works on a project collaboratively that is tailored to the student's abilities and learning style tendencies (Kinesthetic, Audio, and Visual Learning Styles).

> *"Product differentiation is carried out through projects because projects are also part of the product. So each student is given a different project to complete learning outcomes. In persuasive texts, some groups make free pictures based on what they see, arrange blocks to resemble bridges/buildings, make batik, or mix colors. So each child in the group can tell a story based on what they have made." Product differentiation makes adaptations to children's product assignments.*

Which is reviewed on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2001:86). Furthermore, the teacher implements learning. differentiated in group A Kindergarten Ahmad Yani Binjai has divided each class into three groups Kinesthetic, Audio, and Visual Learning Styles).

**Advantages of Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Differentiated Learning in Ahmad Yani Binjai Kindergarten**

Based on the results of interviews with Kindergarten teacher Ahmad Yani in the implementation of learning in the classroom, the teacher's superiority is that he is varied in implementing learning, even the learning that is carried out is often carried out outside the classroom with various strategies and approaches. These three things characterize group A in Kindergarten Ahmad Yani, that learning activities are fun and exciting, children are happy and happy, namely the aim is to make students happy in participating in activities in class. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

> *"You can understand the children and know what they want, that's why lessons are often held outside the classroom, rarely in the classroom. Because he often takes lessons outside of class. I became the favorite because during the election my favorite teacher was chosen"*

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*"These strengths in teachers make it easier to implement differentiated learning. There are many confessions from interviews that explain that this teacher is always looked forward to and missed by his students because of the large variety of learning, ideas, and so that in the future it will be easier for the teacher"*

**Figure 1. Learning that children are interested in**

## Conclusion

The results of this research show that kindergarten teachers' reflections on the basic concepts of education in the alpha generation are that differentiated learning carried out in driving schools includes diagnostic assessments, content differentiation, process differentiation, And product differentiation. In more detail, the implementation experienced quite a lot of obstacles and there were even activities that were outside the provisions of the independent curriculum. These include diagnostic assessments that have not met the requirements/through the stages of an assessment action, teachers are still confused about integrating learning readiness, learning styles, and learning readiness. Apart from that, the results of the reflection also reveal that teachers have advantages in implementing differentiated learning. These advantages are that teachers often vary their learning, teachers become idols of students, and teachers are officially chosen by the community. This makes students more relaxed, happy, and happy when learning at school.

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